



America's Arctic Paratroopers

1-501 GERONIMO

Fort Richardson, Alaska

NEWS

May, 2004

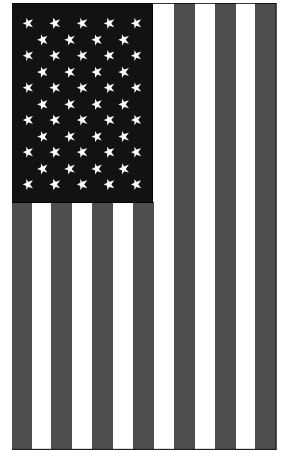
Message From the TF Commander

Dear Geronimo Families,

As I write this letter, most of the Task Force members have been deployed to Afghanistan for over six months. The Geronimo troopers remain focused on their mission here and continue to serve their country. You should be incredibly proud of your husbands, wives, sons, and daughters. The Geronimos continue to define and set the standard for our fight in Afghanistan. Regardless of who it is or where they come from, when units arrive to Afghanistan, they come to Forward Operating Base Salerno to see how we are accomplishing the mission. Your loved ones are that good at what they do.



As of today, I still cannot report a solid date for when we will return home. I told every Geronimo here that as soon as I find out, I will report back to Alaska. As I discussed this with our troopers, I reminded both myself and them that we should be thankful. Many units have been extended well beyond a year in Iraq. Many soldiers have lost their lives in the War on Terrorism, to include Ranger Pat Tillman who died fighting on the same ground that we have driven and walked many times. Each Geronimo remains focused on accomplishing our mission for America. We will not fail!



As always, I remain incredibly impressed with the selfless sacrifice of every family member in Alaska and the lower 48. Your resourcefulness, independence, care for each other, and sense of unity are traits at which we can only marvel. Your actions speak for themselves. The assistance and concern you display for each other are outstanding and impress each of us. Unfortunately, there are a few who would attempt to disrupt or derail the incredible actions of the Family Readiness Groups; do not be quickly drawn into those groups. Trust your FRG and ask your chain of concern if you have questions. Your Geronimos have only one request: continue to support and allow your soldier to remain focused on the task here in Afghanistan: to close with and destroy enemies who would do your family and country harm.

It is my privilege to serve with you and my honor to command such fine men and women. Geronimo!

HARRY C. GLENN, III
Lieutenant Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

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Hatchet Company

S-1

The Personnel Actions Center continues to serve the Soldiers and spouses of Task Force 1-501st. Five months into the deployment, the PAC continues to ensure that Soldiers are paid, get promoted, receive awards, and get their mail. With over 900 Geronimos spread between Fort Richardson, Bagram, and FOB Salerno, this is no easy task. SFC Lesch has provided excellent leadership and execution of a PAC designed to handle only 570 paratroopers. Add in the tenet units at Salerno, and he's ensuring that actions are processed for nearly 1100 Soldiers deployed to Afghanistan. We lost him briefly in January when he returned to FRA to deal with the effects of the Stop Loss/Stop Move, as well as continuing to work the Airborne Task Force MTOE and the personnel requirements that come with that. We're happy to have him back keeping the Salerno ALOC straight. SGT Harris, coming to us from STB just prior to deployment, was the "go to" NCO in SFC Lesch's absence and keeps the PAC Soldiers in good shape with a rigorous PT program. SGT Harris deployed to the field for both Operation Avalanche and Blizzard, tracking personnel on missions. SGT Harris is a tremendous asset and the key addition to a PAC that already does more with less. SGT Goff kept the ALOC running smoothly with his presence in BAF, and has now returned to FRA to replace SGT Butler as the Rear Detachment S1 NCOIC. A critical piece for Rear Detachment is the PAC, handling new and departing soldiers, as well as many issues that come up during a long deployment for spouses. SGT Goff will do great. SGT Butler, who was just dying to leave the Alaska winter and enjoy some time in the desert, helps strengthen the shop's efforts in country. It is great having him here to help the shop with the heavy load redeployment will place on us. SPC Nino, recently promotable, has done outstanding work and is now the senior S1 representative in BAF, taking SGT Goff's position. His attitude, work ethic, and job performance are unmatched. His partner in crime in BAF is SPC Crews, also recently promotable. SPC Crews has done an incredible job ensuring that mail gets to the Soldiers. With 501st units in three or more locations, SPC Crews sorts the mail in BAF and pushes it to the Soldier's location. To date he has handled over 150,000 pounds of Geronimo mail (keep sending it)! SPC Smith is busy processing awards (over 400 CIBs, over 30 CMBs, 100 BSMs, 300 ARCOMs, and many more) and running the Salerno PX. Not exactly a typical duty for a S1 shop to execute, the PX has been a tremendous addition for soldier life here. With a wide variety of items (TVs, candy, drinks, t-shirts, magazines, etc), the PX has done over \$100,000 in business just since 24 December when it opened. SPC Greenlee, our actions clerk, continues to go above and beyond in his daily duties, handling everything from pay inquiries, to promotion board proceedings, to handling the mail once it gets to Salerno. He is able to handle so many different tasks at the same time, it would make your head spin! PFC Saenz, recently returned from a training trip to Kandahar, is definitely in a class of his own. Handling all legal actions for the Task Force, PFC Saenz not only works at a level well above his pay grade, but keeps the unit straight with UCMJ and other disciplinary actions. He has spent 9 of his first

11 months in Alaska, out of Alaska (a common trend for many Geronimos). The unit ministry team of CH (CPT) Lee and SSG Seaman has done an incredible job ensuring that the spiritual strength of the unit is sustained and maintained. Their "Men of Honor" group has seen incredible growth and the ripple effects of their daily interaction with the Soldiers here is evident to all. Their Friday night movie at the chapel program is just one example of the efforts they have made to make life more enjoyable for all at Salerno. Last, but not certainly not least, everyone reading this newsletter have certainly read "The Geronimo," a publication that would not be possible without the efforts of a very talented PAO specialist, SSG Troth. His pictures and his articles have made it possible for our families to know what all the Soldiers here are doing. He has gone out with every company on missions and patrols, in order to provide complete coverage. He escorts the various media reporters we receive (Time, Newsweek, Fox News, etc). SSG Troth also initiated the Geronimo MWR program putting on a Super Bowl party and setting up a facility with over \$15,000 in entertainment equipment, movies, games, and books. He has since passed the reigns of that program over to PFC Baumdicker who just came to us from C Company. PFC Baumdicker now runs the MWR site and has assisted in the visits of several comedians and a rock band to the FOB. As always, the Geronimo S1 shop gets the job done; there's nothing we can't handle. Name it, we do it: finance, legal, awards, promotions, evaluations, personnel tracking, casualty handling, public affairs, morale and recreation events, spiritual development, personnel requisition, and the list goes on. It continues to be an honor to serve with the men behind the scenes who make life that much better for others. Geronimo PAC!



S-2

Since our deployment to Afghanistan, many changes have taken place in the S2 Shop. Eric Townsend passed the promotion board and moved to D-Det. His replacement in the shop is the newly promoted SPC David McGuire, who has quickly found his niche in the shop and has already made some major contributions. SSG Jesse Dahlburg, who joined the shop just prior to deployment, fulfilled the need for an information operations NCO upon arrival. The most senior member of the shop, SSG Anthony Heck, also moved on to fulfill a squad leader position in Blackfoot company. We were almost certain that after such a long time in the shop SSG Heck would be ready to reclass from an infantryman to an intelligence analyst, but I guess his infantry blood has not yet run dry. His replacement is SFC Johnston, who has also earned a recent promotion. Moving from the front lines to the intelligence staff can be major adjustment, but SFC Jacob Johnston proven to be an invaluable asset to the shop. This leaves SGT(P) Randy Miller as the new veteran of the shop. SGT Miller also passed a recent promotion board with flying colors. His contributions to the shop has brought many comforts to our living conditions as well. LT Craig Cooper reached notoriety in the Task Force when he was crowned as "Miss Salerno" during the Spring Follies Pageant sponsored by HHC. His rendition of Christina Aguilera's hit "Beautiful" added some super-sexy spice to the competition, clinching the title for the young lieutenant. CPT Ed Kilgore has done a terrific job holding the shop together. His leadership has kept everyone focused on success, and his show tunes whistling has kept spirits high. Some 10th Mountain additions to the shop include a Tactical HUMINT Team, who have done some great work collecting intelligence from the locals, and a Prophet team whose capabilities have had a major impact on the success of the Task Force's operations. Despite all the excitement, we are all looking forward to being back home with our families; we miss you all very much



The Mighty S-2 Shop in front of and inside of their "high security" office

Hatchet Company Cont

DFAC

We the DFAC section of Headquarters Company of the 1-501 PIR, would like to say hello to our families and loved ones back home. The past five months we have been supporting the battalion with outstanding chow and doing our part in the fight on terrorism here in Afghanistan. We are all doing fine over here and have just handed the cooking duties over to Brown and Root, but our duties do not stop here. We would like to say thank you to our families for their support and patience and we hope to see you very soon. Thanks to the students of Ursa Minor Elementary School for supporting us with snacks and other goodies. Thanks to everyone that supported us over here in Afghanistan.



Geronimo DFAC Section
81mm Mortar Platoon – “Undertaker”

Birthdays Anniversaries

SPC Brock Anderson – 8 January
SPC George and Susan Cabrera – 3 January
PFC Jonathan Phillips – 20 January
SPC Jason and Karlene Wright – 17 January
PFC Brian Cash – 27 January
PVT Justin Elrod – 16 February
SPC Jason Wright – 19 February
SGT William Dimonde – 12 March
Promotions
SPC Paul Zucco – 20 March
SPC Darren Gallant – 25 March
SGT William Dimonde – 1 February
PFC Jose Solano – 9 April
SPC Paul Zucco – 1 February

News

The platoon’s nickname of Undertaker is growing on each man in the Mortar Platoon. It is also bringing us success. We will request to replace our Alaskan call sign of Arctic Lightning to Undertaker.

The Undertakers have been constantly on the move over the last few months. The time the platoon spent together over the holidays was great. The platoon traveled to a nearby camp on a security mission. It was a joy to spend the holidays consolidated as a platoon and be able to set up the Christmas tree with ornaments sent to us by the platoon’s wives. Nearly every man had the chance to call home.

That mission was a nice change from both previous operations and missions that the mortar platoon has done since. The single-day and multiple-day missions the platoon conducted assisted us in our pre-mission and post-mission routine. We have made many refinements to our platoon SOP.

We celebrated the New Year with our own fireworks (81mm Illumination.) Our FDC supervised a range lateral spread mission with the platoon’s mortars and our neighboring 120mm mortars.

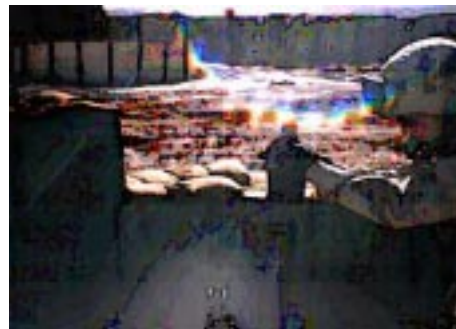
We have spent our time in the New Year supporting countless missions and have worked with every combat company in the task force as well as a company from another battalion and other units in theater. We have been on the move. However, it has helped to make time pass by at a fast rate. The weather in Afghanistan is has a wide range of extremes. I think we have seen it all since the New Year. The rainy overcast days have persisted through much of the winter. We have even been in a snowy and sleeting blizzard. However, the sun pierces through the clouds about half the time and heats up the days. Regardless of the weather, the platoon mantra while in the field is “Pot Belly, Pot Belly, Pot Belly...” The pot belly stoves in our tent always welcome us back to main camp.

Construction is going on all around us; there are improvements throughout camp. New tents are being set up close to the Grave Yard that the platoon expects to move into in the coming weeks. These tents are state-of-the-art, even having central heat and air. We may need to change our chant. With temperatures rising, we won’t need the stove much longer. With the recent promotion of SGT Dimonde and ankle injury of SPC Zucco, the platoon plans to switch up our roster in the coming weeks. The platoon headquarters element will see the most changes. SGT Chester will return to FDC as a check computer and both SPC Anderson and PFC Brinkman will return to mortar squads. These changes will go into effect once our pace slows down.

In February, the platoon focused on individual skills training upon returning to the FOB. The men and leaders both have gained from this training. Despite all of the missions, the platoon was able to watch the Super Bowl. About half the platoon braved the chill temperatures to watch the game, which started around midnight local time. Most of the platoon cheered for the Carolina Panthers, while SPC Paul Zucco rooted for the Patriots. Regardless of the disappointment for most of the soldiers in the platoon, the men were grateful when the wives of the platoon prepared a party for us. In addition to mailing a DVD copy of the game (with commercials), they sent snack foods. We all got something out of their thoughtfulness. We have been adopted by Mr. Walsh’s 5th grade class at Ursa Major Elementary on Fort Richardson, Alaska. It has been great to read their comic books starring the platoon and letters. We have also enjoyed the generosity of others. Many strangers have mailed letters of encouragement and one family in upstate New York sent the platoon socks for Christmas and cards with candies for Valentines. Thank you to all.

CPT David Dyrenforth
Undertaker 6

SFC Richard Holladay
Undertaker 7



PFC Gallant hangs a mortar round during a training mission



SPC Cabrera glances back into a cave after clearing with his squad



PFC Brinkman surveys a registration point as camels forage in the background

Congratulations to the following paratroopers for reenlisting or extending:
SFC Leheny (S-3 AIR) SGT Majcher (Mortars)

Congratulations to the following promotees:

SFC Johnston (S-2)	SGT Cucarro (Engineers)
SGT Dimonde (Mortars)	SPC Brinkman (Mortars)
SPC Burchett (S-3)	SPC Long (Scouts)
SPC Mitchell (Scouts)	SPC Murphy (Support)
SPC Schram (S-3)	SPC Sullivan (Scouts)
SPC Trinidad (Mortars)	SPC Woods (Commo)

HATCHET 6



Apache Company

Hello once again to all Apache Company families and friends. Our operational tempo has slowed down somewhat since our last update. We are now the company charged with security for FOB Salerno. It can get pretty boring at times, and with the weather starting to really heat up, it can get rather miserable for the soldiers in the towers over watching the surrounding countryside. Despite these factors, it remains a very important duty and all the companies share in it. Just know that all the soldiers of the 501st are in good hands.

Improvements are continuing steadily at Salerno. We have an Olympic sized swimming pool and we are living in condominiums with housekeepers, a day spa, and room service. That is a slight exaggeration, but it's getting much better every day. The new dining facility is finished and civilian contractors have taken over the operation. Work has begun on a school to begin to teach the local populace English. The gym is now housed in brick and concrete, which is much cooler than the old tent; it will be apparent to many families just how popular this facility has become when we return. Much of the task force has moved over to the new Force Provider tents with climate controlled comfort. Apache Company, however, will remain where we have lived from the

beginning. We are eagerly awaiting generators that can power the air conditioning units that we have (we hear they are on the way). For now, we have large fans in the tents and we roll up the sides during the day.

There have been a few changes in the Apache Company line-up since the last newsletter. 3rd Platoon has welcomed SGT(P) Button to its ranks as 1st Squad Leader. He came over from 2nd Platoon. SPC Reynolds came to the company from a cushy staff job in the S-3. He has also joined 3rd Platoon. On a sad note, we are lamenting the day that 1SG Sonnenschein will leave; career progression has robbed us of one of the great ones. Thanks to him for all he has done to make this a great organization and for all the support from his family back home, you will all be sorely missed. Hot on his heels will be CPT (D) Pierce, who will be leaving to become a Physician Assistant. That is, if we can pry him away from the X-Box long enough to get him on the plane. Thanks to him and his family for all they've done for the Apaches. He will leave some big shoes to fill.

Promotions are also still occurring here in Afghanistan and careers are continuing to progress. We would like to congratulate our new Private First Class: PFC Holland, and our new Specialists: SPC Campbell, SPC Morgan, SPC Williams, SPC Ozment, and

SPC Garzon. We have also had a few soldiers take the first step toward promotion to the next rank. SGT Krobath, SPC Chavez, SPC Howell and SPC Pisano were all recommended for promotion at the last board, congratulations and we look forward to pinning the new stripes on soon. Although he is now gone from the company and taking it easy in the S-2 section, we would like to congratulate SFC Johnston for pinning on his second rocker. He was, and always will be, considered a part of the Apache family.

As always, thanks to all of you for your support and patience. Without the support of our families back home, this job would be even more difficult. The time is flying by as we continue with our mission here and it seems right around the corner that we will all be back in Alaska spending time with our loved ones and thrashing the salmon. Keep the mail flowing, there is nothing more motivating than letters and packages, and keep us in your prayers. We'll see you soon.

1LT Steve (Mulva) Tegge
A Co., 3RD Platoon Leader



Apache Company Cont



SFC Parrish working hard, or hardly working at Polecharki. ODP!



SPC Wheeler laying down fire on "Ivan"



SGT Doyle takes aim with his M-14.



SPC Marovich, SPC Blakely, SPC Burger, SPC(P) Howell, and SGT Currie. There's no place like home



SFC Ramey, 1LT Tegge, 1SG Sonnenschein, SSG Spahl



SPC Ray Lambert prepares for take off on a SCUD Missile near Kabul.

Blackfoot Company

The month of March has gone by really fast for the soldiers of Blackfoot company. Coming off of the FOB security rotation, we immediately transitioned into combat operations. "Immediate" is the right word too, because 6 hours after we turned over the security mission to A Co, we got notice that we were to conduct a helicopter air assault into a village that had 50 armed men and a mid-level Taliban leader. And we were leaving in 2 hours! Soldiers grabbed hamburgers off the grill from the Company BBQ and quickly moved to get their gear for combat. The sight of the company moving furiously to secure their gear and board CH-47 Helicopters was truly awesome! As soon as the birds left Salerno, we were over our objective within 15 minutes. Although the company did not make contact with any ACM forces, we did conduct a deliberate search of the suspicious village for two days. Still, the ability to transition in such short notice from a BBQ to a combat air assault reflects very highly on the company because only few units can accomplish this challenging task, such as Rangers and Special Forces. LTC Glenn, the Task Force Commander, was very proud of the Blackfoot soldiers' ability to ramp up quickly for combat operations.

After this mission we began continuous operations throughout the Khowst bowl. We spent almost two weeks along the boarder with Pakistan where we found a few caches of ammunition, befriended the Afghan boarder checkpoint guards, and established a solid American presence in the area.

Our operations there combined with what the Pakistani Army are doing to the remnants of Al Queda and the Taliban are definitely helping to win the war on terrorism. We continue to place pressure on the enemy in this area to deny him any support or safe haven from the border villages. We will continue to hunt for them to ensure the area is safe for all local nationals that live along the border.

Back at FOB Salerno, B Co was the first company to move into the new tents constructed by the Brown and Root contractors. The best thing about the tents is climate controlled central air conditioning / heating system. A large vent runs along the apex of each tent delivering a constant cool breeze during the heat of the day. In addition to the AC, the ventilation keeps down the dust, storage is provided outside the tent, the tents are well lit with plenty of electrical outlets, and they are conveniently located next to the new showers, new latrines, new laundry, and near the new chow hall. The company is very fortunate to live among the new living accommodations in the FOB. We are still waiting for the improvement in the communications infrastructure, however; the new phone and Internet lines are scheduled to be installed this month.

Team Blackfoot will continue combat operations in April and then move back to FOB security in May. We continued to remain focused so we can accomplish our mission and safely redeploy to our loved ones back home. We continue to appreciate your

support as we past the half way point of our deployment and look forward to finishing as strong as we started on this journey back in October.

Promotions:

Congratulation to the following soldiers for being promoted:

Staff Sergeant Colon, Sergeant Baker, Sergeant Meyer

Specialist Baliey, Howard, Inouye, Williams, Etheridge, Ochsner, Isbell, Brown, Pruitt

Schools:

SGT Bryer, SPC (P) Baker, and SPC Davis attended the Infantry Mountain Leader's Advanced Rifle Marksmanship Course
SPC Gallant graduated the grueling Field Sanitation Course at Bagram

Births:

Congratulations to SPC Daniel and Amy Morris on the birth of their son, Andrew Brady Morris, on March 1st, and CPT Jeff and Janelle Roberts on the birth of their daughter, Jordyn Leigh Roberts, on February 28th

Coins:

The following soldiers were awarded Commanding General coins from Major General Brown, Commander of United States Army Alaska: SGT Satterlee, SGT Williams, SGT Loken, SGT Pietkiewicz, SGT Baker, SPC Mercado, SPC Morris, SPC Davis, SPC Salmans, SPC Doherty, SPC Cheney, SPC Darnel, SPC Hanks, SPC Howard, SPC Baker, SPC Williams, PFC Oakes, PFC Sims, PFC Brown, PFC Doswell, PFC Atchley, PFC Boright, PFC Jiminez

Newcomers:

Welcome to SGT LaShelle who is joining the Blackfoot team from Ft Benning, Georgia

Birthdays:

Happy Birthday to Debra Hensley (3 Apr) and Majorie Tully (17 Apr)

Blackfoot Company Cont



Bco. LT's and FSO after Change of Command



Working with local police to help legitimize new government

B Co. Commander at a village assessment



Re-Enlisting to stay in Afghanistan, O.K. the Army



2nd PLT working border operations



Headed out for another mission

3rd PLT in Pole-charkhi checking caves



FSO and 2nd PLT LDR on his last mission at BCP-4, he is now the support PLT LDR



1st PLT AT-4 training



Talking with locals at IED site; no one hurt

Comanche Company



1ST PLT

Greetings from 1st Platoon Charlie Company. The platoon spent the month of February away from the Task Force at Chapman Airfield providing security for the base. Additionally, each squad went out on several patrols with the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) providing security for them while they helped rebuild the villages in the Khowst Bowl. We split the base security shifts so each squad pulled 12 hours of security and then had 24 hours off to rest, do PT, and provide security for the PRT.



SPC Jansen & PFC Kortus returning from a security patrol with the PRT

We got a new member to the platoon from the scouts, SPC Enos, who is now a rifleman in 1st Squad. Additionally, during our Chapman rotation SSG White became a graduate of the Infantry Mountain Leaders Advanced Rifle Marksmanship (IMLARM) course in Kandahar.



SGT Beals sitting on an airplane prop in the Russian "graveyard" at Chapman Airfield



SPC Enos & Jones watching a movie in their tent



We got back to Salerno on March 5th and have been on "mission cycle" ever since. Our main focus has been to perform village assess-

ments and searches in the mountains outside of the Khost Bowl. We've been doing 3-day missions in the mountains and then returning to the FOB for 2 to 3 days. The squads performed "soft searches" in the village homes looking for illegal weapons and contraband while the headquarters met with the village elders to find out what the towns needed to improve their lives. Right now we are waiting for approval to fund the construction of 4 schools and 2 irrigation projects in different villages throughout the Khost Province.



3rd Squad doing a dismounted patrol through a canyon in the mountains

Just a few days ago, 1st platoon located a large weapons cache. We moved to uncover the site and were pleasantly surprised with what we found: over 60 82mm recoilless rifle rounds, some RPGs, and almost 500 boxes of anti-aircraft ammunition. It looks like our hard work at making peace in this nation is finally paying off for the soldiers.

Comanche Company Cont



"Doc" Jun posing in front of nearly 500 boxes of anti-aircraft ammunition. We're well past the half-way point, and time is really passing quickly now that Spring is here. Know that America couldn't have sent a better bunch of soldiers than those in 1st Platoon. We are all very grateful for all the hard work you are doing at home to help us. Know that we are staying safe and thinking of all of you each day as July approaches.

LT Huck Finn
2nd Platoon

2nd Platoon has officially become stone cold immortals in their hunt for Al-Qaeda and Taliban. No longer do we roll our eyes when locals tell us: "that mine is not mine", "RPG rounds – what RPG rounds", and everyone's favorite "that was in my guest room".

The platoon has been busy enjoying vertical walks, long drives in the country, and patting down men in pajamas. In our spare time we manage to do a patrol or two, conduct village assessments, and stumble across large machine guns (capable of taking down the heartiest of moose) with thousands of bullets – claimed to be used for **"Home Defense."**



2nd Platoon, Charlie Company Task Force 1-501st. (Al Qaeda and Taliban Hunting Club)



The reason I mentioned last month that your husband will return and probably stare out of a window for long periods of time.



2nd Platoon RTO, SPC Scholz, attempting to smile during one of our afternoon vertical walks.



SSG Jared Sarten staying cool wearing his unauthorized "Man Scarf"



2nd platoon sled riding, the closest thing to Alaska since our arrival



SPC Padilla receiving an "IV", showing his true colors – kicking himself for not drinking more water.



SSG Arguello doing his best to appear busy and engaged in some meaningful task. If you look closely – the map is upside down.

SPC Patton waking from his nap at high-noon, discovers



he forgot to put on sunscreen and is now requesting aloe.



SSG Carmoney attempts to reason with the hostile crowd and swears he did not eat their chicken.

1LT Brian Harber

3rd Platoon

March came in like a Lion and went out like a Lamb. The Men of third Platoon have been very busy; Operation Geronimo Storm is in Full Swing. We have been conducting village assessments, Local Patrols, Vehicle Check points and helping free Afghanistan of Al Qaeda and Taliban while taking a moment to enjoy some the local Afghan hospitality.

Comanche Company Cont



PFC. Brandon Bryant enjoying a moment of solitude with his breakfast on a mission.



One more victory for Comanche and a great Meal to boot! PFC Chris Whittaker, SPC. Michael Smith, SPC. James Rogers, SPC. Sonkulp Mehta, PFC. Amal Agalawatta, and SGT. Kris Harvey enjoy a wonderful meal prepared in our honor by the Local villagers on one of our missions.



Moving out on a mission SPC. Brady Salli adjusting his body armor, SPC. David Barber saying Hi to Mom and Dad, PFC. Benjamin Balsiger, PFC. Brandon Bryant and SPC. Jamie Hurt with their game face on



When Comanche's run out of bullets!!!!- SPC. Ryan Verkennis and SPC. James Rogers



Third Platoon Combat Volleyball team! – SSG Westlake, SGT Carpenter, SSG Reed and SPC Salli



And finally our Platoon Sergeant SSG Rivera reminiscing of his younger days back in the Bronx!

HQ Platoon

With all of the missions during the past month, March has come and gone more quickly than most of us thought it would. The company has done a wide range of missions at the platoon and company level. We in HQ have often remained centrally located between the various platoons, waiting to support whichever platoon needs a little assistance.

The soldiers of HQ have done a good job of supporting the company. HQ's soldiers' busy times have largely been during the periods of preparation for missions and returns from missions. They have done an excellent job of making things happen behind the scenes, allowing the rifle platoons to complete their missions. As a result, Charlie Company has been a success.

Probably one of the most interesting things that we saw during our most recent mission was a herd of tree climbing goats. These goats belong on David Letterman's "Stupid Pet Tricks." They actually climbed several feet off the ground into the tops of the scrub trees in order to eat the leaves. It's an interesting thing to see goats climbing trees. Everyone should witness it at least once in life.

We have had a notable change in HQ Platoon this past month, however. SPC Reynolds from 3rd Platoon has come to be a part of the HQ FIST element and SPC Holmes has gone to 3rd Platoon to be the Forward Observer's RTO. We have also had the addition of SGT Thomas to the HQ team. So far these two new additions have proved to be valuable assets to our team in HQ. It's good to have them.

As we head into the month of April we are looking forward to FOB Security and the change of pace it brings. Things are starting to warm up here, and our tents aren't air conditioned, so feel free to send your favorite soldier any Gatorade or other touches of home you can think of.

Comanche Company Cont



SSG Ferguson and PVT Medrano, Two of our Forward Observers, “observing”



“No, this is not Papa John’s.”



A herd of tree climbing goats eyeing a potential feast in the limbs above



ILT Sheats shooting a commercial for Akheem’s road-side camel service



CPT Condrey “supervising” HQ rest plan after a long night

CPT Brown
Executive Officer

Delta Detachment



1SG Imler, SFC Dryer, and CPL Rodriguez prepare Team Delaware to move out for operations near the end of March

Hello to all of our families back in the States. We have made it to Spring already and time continues to march onward as the Delawares continue to set the standard for continuous operations here in Afghanistan. Why, you may ask, are the Delawares so busy? D Detachment is the only maneuver company that does not pull a FOB security rotation. If you would ask the companies that pull the duty, they would tell you that it is too long, boring, and they would rather be outside the wire. However, even though Apache, Blackfoot, and Comanche companies would rather be outside the wire, they also get a much-needed break from operations outside the wire and the ability to focus on personnel and equipment recovery. D Detachment has been going outside the wire week in and week out without a break since arrival in theater. An indicator of how busy we have been since our arrival in theater is our mileage on our HMMWVs. Some of the guys are reaching 4,000 miles on their vehicles. That may not seem like a lot, but if you imagine it like driving from New York to Los Angeles on a bumpy, dusty dirt road, it puts it into perspective. But don't worry about your boys, we get our chances to

recover and relax. Our guys have had their chances to watch movies, play video games, and just relax.



A row of the new air-conditioned D Detachment tents. Each tent has its own storage connex.

We even found time in mid March to move into our new tents. Yes, we got out of the leaky, hot tents in which we have spent the last 4 ½ months and were given new air-conditioned tents. The air conditioning couldn't have come at a better time, as the temperatures have gone from being mid-seventies during the day, to low 90's during the day. And, it is only getting hotter.

In early March we had some bad luck, having two vehicle accidents. 3rd Platoon lost one of its HMMWVs after part of a road gave way in the mountains and it rolled down a 70 foot embankment. Thankfully, no one was seriously injured, although LT Kavanaugh was sore and bruised for several weeks. After two days of attempted recovery, we had to destroy the vehicle so that it would not fall into the hands of the enemy. Then, during an operation with C CO, 1st Platoon had a vehicle roll over accident when some oncoming traffic blinded our driver and he veered off an embankment. Again, thankfully, because of the training that the men have been conducting (specifi-

cally roll over drills), no one was seriously hurt, although SGT Dunagan and SPC Norton did suffer some minor injuries. Luckily we did not lose that truck and it only spent a few days undergoing repairs.



Engineers prepare the 3rd Platoon truck for demolition after three days of failed recovery attempts

We also just received our video-grams from home and family. It was very nice to come back out of the field to a friendly face and our loved ones sending us their best wishes via video disk. Thanks to everyone who took the time to make our days and send us a piece of home. Several announcements to make regarding the Detachment since our last newsletter: In 1st PLT and PFC Hunter were promoted to SPC. In 2nd PLT, PFC Palma was promoted to SPC. In 3rd PLT PFC Howland, PFC Rouche, and PFC Maguire were promoted to SPC. In HQ PLT, PFC Smith was promoted to SPC. SFC Imler was promoted to 1SG.



Bravo Battery

Greetings from the Paratroopers of "EAGLE" Battery, and hello again from Forward Operating Base (FOB) Salerno, Khowst Afghanistan.

FEBRUARY 2004: An extremely busy yet very productive month! 1SG and I want everyone to know that we could write an entire book while listing the significant "War on Terror" accomplishments and impacts of your husbands, fathers and sons. We will however keep the update brief in order to leave most of the detailed events for your paratrooper to tell when he comes home. I promise you that your Paratrooper will have a ton of pictures, events, and information to which he is deservedly...extremely proud!



Men from 2nd Platoon observe the destruction of the targets after Platoon Live Fires. "Steel on Steel...Outstanding!"



Gunny Marlow lays the guns in the new Fire Base after their return from their mission in Bagram.

During the month of February, the 1st Platoon under the leadership of 1LT Todd and SSG Thompson a.k.a

"Gunny" deployed to Bagram Air Field in order to relieve 2nd Platoon and continue the battery support of the Base Defense. It was a fitting "welcome back" to FOB Salerno for 1LT Mitchell, SSG (P) Marlow and their platoon. 2nd Platoon along with SSG Williams, B (3rd Section), SSG Tharp (4th Section) and SGT Grubaugh (FDC) and their men had been operating independently for over two months throughout the entire country. Without question, the men of this platoon made a significant and lasting impact in the war on terror, and through their efforts were congratulated by every leader within their chain of command, to include the Commanding General!



SSG Green and SGT Ford enjoying a little sun at the Fire Base in Bagram. They are trying to figure out what do next, Call Home or go to the PX?



1st Platoon Leader and Sergeant, 1LT Todd and SSG Thompson, posing in the Bagram Fire Base

It is now 1st Platoons turn to pick up where second platoon left off. SGT(P) Cochrane, SSG Green, SGT(P) Bailey and their men are currently enjoying all the amenities afforded in Bagram (phones, computers, PX, gym etc.) while simultaneously providing 24 hour Artillery support and position improvement on the permanent fire base that the "Eagles" constructed.



On 15 February we had a Battery Barbeque and grilled chicken, ribs, burgers and dogs. The men enjoyed some card games, shot some pool, and played ping-pong, while some of us watched the first television(on the VCR/DVD player) episodes of the Average Joe. Other unique and "High Speed" opportunities this month included SPC Ritley flying in a Super Cobra helicopter and SSG Ferguson, SGT Blount, SGT Gill, SPC Dragoo, and SPC Larson all deploying to Khandahar for some outstanding weapons training...of course now they all want to be SWAT!

"Chef Floyd", SFC Bey and CW2 Santos of the Massachusetts National Guard man the grill.



SPC Maddy in line and ready to grub on some chicken, ribs, and burgers from SSG Floyd



The month of February also sent our first soldiers on Rest and Relaxation(R + R) to Qatar. SSG Floyd, SPC Spring, PFC Ireland, PFC James and PFC Fiekert all flew to Qatar where they enjoyed jet skiing, parasailing, and for those over 21....a two beer per day limit(lucky them). After observing the smiles on their faces when they returned...all seemed to enjoy themselves. We also need to tell you about the 3 on 3 battery volleyball tournament in

Bravo Battery Cont

the Firebase. It was a long hot day but "Team Cosgriff" prevailed with CPT Morgan, CPT Cosgriff, and SGT West. (Congratulations)



1st Place goes to Team "XO"...Looks like CPT Morgan, CPT Cosgriff and SGT West get the trophy or is that a Canister?



SSG Bobby "I can sky" Williams returns a volley in the semi finals. Everyone had fun this day!

The month of March brings us to five months in Theater supporting the War on Terrorism. The men have all adjusted nicely to the unique environment of Afghanistan and we have been witness to major improvements within FOB Salerno. The "FOB" looks entirely different, and for the better, than when we first arrived last October. In addition to constructing a new Fire Base, the firing battery moved into the new Force Provider tents in the expansion area. 1SG and I can not put into words the major improvements to the quality of living since the Kellogg, Brown and Root company began its construction projects within the FOB. The men now have 100% fully functioning

"hot" showers (with no time limit), new latrines, and most recently, tents with climate control options (AWESOME)! Perfect timing for our battery as the weather will go from HOT to *UNBEARABLE* within the next few months. If anything, our soldiers like to keep the tents too cold, but it sure is great to have that option!!! Not only did they receive air-conditioning in the tents but they now only have 7 to 10 men per tent which is less crowded than then before. Needless to say they will be buying TV's and DVD's and some will even continue to battle each other on latest and greatest video games on the market. Just when you thought it couldn't get much better on FOB Salerno, along comes a refrigerator for each tent, enabling the men to keep their drinks cold too. It is important however to remember that our time isn't always spent with "barbeques, volleyball, air conditioning, and watching movies," the men have been extremely busy fighting the War on Terrorism and doing their part to keep the lives of every American free. Every week the battery along side of our maneuver brethren, are constantly on the hunt for Ex-Taliban and Al-Queda personnel who were responsible for the tragedy on September 11, 2001. You should be proud of each and every soldier deployed abroad from our great nation, from Iraq to Afghanistan, and especially proud of your "Airborne Artilleryman in Eagle Battery" deployed to OEF IV!!!



A hasty vehicle check-point; SSG Dean and his men control the crowd and check suspicious locals and cars



SSG Tharp and his men dig in their position prior to manning their positions. Digging is a must when outside the wire of the FOB, and especially during overnight operations.

Operations this month(March) have been fast and furious. All Eagle elements have been required to go outside the wire on combat missions while simultaneously maintaining 24 hour firing capability from within FOB Salerno and Bagram. The high operational tempo however is welcomed by all, for the busier we remain, the faster the time seems to go by, which in turn will bring us all back to Fort Richardson sooner. In addition to combat operations, the battery has initiated construction on perhaps the most significant and lasting impact we can have on this country; A FOB Salerno English School. This project will require the battery to plan, construct, and implement an educational program that will teach the local Afghan children the English language. CPT Cosgriff, SFC Nixon, SSG Floyd, SGT (P) Beardsley, SPC Edelstein, SPC Ritley, PFC Feikert and numerous other battery soldiers are all well under way in beginning stages of the school...and we have over 50 young and eager to learn students ready to begin classes.

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Smoke Nixon, CPT Cosgriff and Hakim, (The in-TERP-reter) meet with educators in the town of Tani to discuss school improvements



FOB School registration "Geronimo style," Locals flock to learn English language

Other operations and ongoing projects include SPC White "DOC" and SGT (P) West providing medical supplies to a local hospital and the battery planning for five wells to provide water in a village that desperately needs our help. Our Airborne Artillerymen trade mark as the "King of Battle" is alive and well....but our soldiers are also dedicated to improving the quality of life within the country of Afghanistan. The men have conducted operations including vehicle checkpoints, local patrols, provided security, and all key leaders were trained on the different weapon systems commonly used by the Al-Qaeda and Taliban. Definitely some outstanding training that will greatly benefit us down the road!



The NCO's learn about the AK-47, and other foreign weapon systems used by Terrorist agencies. "Know your enemy!"



"Kodak Moment" SSG Fowle and his "Six Pack Section" caught on camera with a camel and a local national. Our boys will search everything!!!

March also included our monthly Battery Barbecue, with this one being held in Firebase Nixon. The men again enjoyed great chow courtesy of SSG Williams T., SSG Sharp, PFC Ireland, PFC Hendricks, and PFC Fajardo....Thanks men, we greatly enjoyed, and so did everyone else who joined us from the Task Force...to include Command Sergeants Major Turnbull(TF 1-501) and CSM Grippe(1st Bde 10th Mountain Division). We do it right in Eagle Battery!!!



Volleyball was once again the sport of the day during the Battery Barbeque. No shortage on sand here!



Notice the grill master this month is SSG's Sharp and Williams, with help from PFC's Ireland and Hendricks. PFC Fajardo is eating and not cooking.

Current Operations: 3rd Platoon is in the process of rotating to Bagram Air Field (BAF) to relieve 1st Platoon. SFC Weaver, SSG Williams, Terrell "a.k.a. Gunny Will", SSG (P) Geck, SSG Dean, SSG Fowle and their men

will now be the last crew to rotate through BAF and to experience the numerous luxuries associated with Bagram. In addition to repositioning our platoons, it looks promising to send close to 40 more personnel to Qatar in order to enjoy Rest and Relaxation opportunities. Be on the lookout next month for feedback from our soldiers on their experiences in both Bagram and Qatar. 3rd Platoon was greatly looking forward to their trip....We hope they enjoy!



Enjoying BBQ Ribs and watching "Average Joe," taped by Caren Levis for the men to enjoy. Last episode will air in April for us to watch.

SPC Warren and PFC Stover are recognized by the 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division Commander. Congrats guys!



Without their maturity, professionalism and unparalleled commitment to excellence, this battery would not be capable of continually accomplishing the toughest of missions. Additionally we would like to recognize the significant promotions of SGT Gill and his indoctrination into the

Bravo Battery Cont

Non-Commissioned Officers Corps, and to PFC Breeze who is a proud member of our 3rd Howitzer section.



PFC Breeze was promoted on Feb. 1st after arriving back to FOB Salerno and his two month vacation in BAF



SGT Gill gets promoted to Sergeant on March 1st. SGT Gill is the 2nd Platoon Forward Observer for Blackfoot Company. "Eyes of Death!"



SSG Dean after his swearing in ceremony by CPT Cosgriff

The month of March also included SSG Dean, SSG Herbst and SPC Reynolds reenlistments! CONGRATULATIONS! We would also like to extend our regards to the families of SPC Solivan, PFC McGeathay, and SGT Saunders. These soldiers all received "Red Cross" messages on the death or illness of relatives and they have our

deepest sympathies. We also couldn't close without recognizing some new additions to the Eagle family. We would like to welcome Privates Cunningham, Cloutier, Faust, Hedgepeth, Kroetsch, Martinez, Morales, and Peters to the Battery.



SPC Reynolds after his swearing in ceremony by 1LT Sheats high up on OP-3.



SSG Herbst gets sworn in by 1LT Davison during his re-enlistment



A "jingle truck" full of local nationals headed to an Afghan Wedding.

Wishing all of the extended "EAGLE" family the very best from the forward deployed Red Leg Paratroopers of the "World's Only Arctic Airborne Field Artillery Battery!"



KING OF BATTLE!

"GERONIMO!"

CPT Morgan & 1SG Levis

Forward Support Company

FSC “Wardogs”

Wardog greetings from FOB Salerno! It is time once again for our monthly newsletter, which also means we are one month closer to finishing up mission, redeploying, and heading back to the “Great Up North.” The FSC continues to stay focused on the daily activities and requirements found here in both FOB Salerno, and Bagram, Afghanistan. The soldiers and NCO’s of the FSC remain dedicated to the mission at hand and the welfare of each other. Currently we are kept quite busy in support of Operation Mountain Storm, and Task Force 1-501st has found success in areas ranging from obtaining and destroying mass weapons caches, to aiding in building and supplying local village schools. All those associated with the FSC would like to thank the family members and friends of those currently deployed. Your support, prayers, and wishes of well being truly do help to lift soldier moral, and remind each and everyone one of us, that it is through the strength of our loved ones, that we in turn gain strength. Below you will find some statements from each of our FSC sections, providing some insight and expressing some thoughts...enjoy.

Headquarters

Everything is going great in Headquarters Platoon. In the last month we welcomed several new Ammunition Supply Specialists (55B) to Afghanistan. They are SPC Terry, PFC Harmon, PV2 Thaodara, and PV2 Collins. They are all quite busy learning ASP (Ammunition Supply Point) procedures, as well as secondary duties in supply, arms room, and Command Post operations. We have also participated in numerous missions throughout AO (Area of Operation) Geronimo. Despite all of the hard work we have been doing this month, we found several opportunities to have just as much fun. These opportunities range from half of the platoon traveling to Qatar for four day of R&R (Rest and Relaxation), B-B-Q’s outside the CP, to heated Spades and Dominoes games in our tents. We have all found ways to have a little fun here in the land of the sun. The entire platoon cannot wait to get back home and see all of our loved ones again. The days are getting closer to our eventual return to Alaska.

Direct Support

We have been working harder than ever as we pass through the halfway point of our deployment. The automotive section has been working particularly hard due to operation tempo, and the surrounding harsh terrain. Not to say that the other sections are slacking. All equipment is returned to useable status as soon as humanly possible and often only limited to the amount of time it takes to receive repair parts. The area is heating up, with temperatures already in the 80’s and 90’s. We are all working hard to complete our mission and are eager to come home to our families. The Direct Support Platoon has also had some well-deserved promotions and one new addition to the Wardog family. PV2 Wright was recently promoted to Specialist as well as having celebrated his 21st birthday this last month. SPC Jones, Wichlacz and Faulkner are all newly promotable. And finally, Sgt Gillum and his family have a new addition, a baby boy, Maxwell Easton, born on the 15th of March, and weighing in at a healthy 9lbs, 13oz.

Motor Pool Platoon

Everything has been going great. Everybody has a great attitude and is working very hard. We are all having a good time. We want to thank you for your support and can’t wait to come home.

Supply & Transportation

Now that we have reached the halfway point, the Supply & Transportation Platoon is still holding strong. Driving seemingly unending missions, we manage to keep up with our day to day soldier duties. We all look forward to the day that we are reunited with our friends and loved ones.

Chaplain's Corner



Greetings Geronimo families. I trust that as the snow is melting and the days grow longer indicating that winter is soon coming to an end, there is a renewed hope that this deployment will come to an end someday as well. Each of you has coped in your own way and you have gotten this far. For some however, this may be your first deployment as an Army wife and/or the first extended separation you have endured. Even if you have experienced significant military separation or a deployment before, this deployment has its' own unique challenges. For starters, most of us are not from Alaska and do not have family members that are a state or two away, such as might be the case if you were stationed in the lower 48. And as I already alluded to the fact, unlike most states in which spring has sprung, while winter is quickly losing its' grip, it will still be a while before the grass needs mowed.

All of that aside, I would offer some encouragement to each of you. To begin, we have been deployed over six months now without losing a single Geronimo. That fact alone is a reminder of how blessed we are and we can certainly be thankful to God for His protection. Furthermore, our soldiers have exhibited the highest level of professionalism and skill in what they do contributing greatly to our success and safety as well.

As this deployment seems to drag on in some ways, I would encourage each of you to consider how you have grown. You may not realize it but you have. Some of you have grown in your relationships around you. Others have matured in their sense of responsibility. Believe me, many of us here have realized growth in ourselves as well! Again from my vantage point as a Chaplain, while this time has been challenging, it has also been a wonderful opportunity to grow spiritually. Some of you have experienced that dynamic and know exactly what I mean. You have grown in your relationship with God and more what it means to trust and rely on Him for strength and guidance. If that is not the case, I would challenge you to consider just how meaningful a relationship with God can be in your life.

In addition, I would offer some practical resources that can be of encouragement to you as well. Focus on the Family has extensive resources to assist military families and spouses coping with a deployment. Their website address is www.family.org. Just type in "military" in their website search engine and you will find a variety of subjects dealing with everything from helping kids to cope to handling finances during a deployment. Another organization that offers help to military families is the Christian Military Fellowship. Their website address is www.cmfhq.org. You may also find The Center for Military Readiness helpful as well. Their website can be found at www.cmrlink.org. Lastly, www.armywives.com is a site that may offer you encouragement as well as it encompasses wives Army-wide that are experiencing the challenges of deployment.

As always, it is my honor, along with my assistant SSG Nathan Seaman, to serve alongside your husbands, wives, sons, and daughters, in the war on terrorism. God is faithful and I pray that He will safely guide all of us both here and at home through the remainder of this deployment. Grace and peace to each of you.

For God & Country,
Chaplain James B. Lee